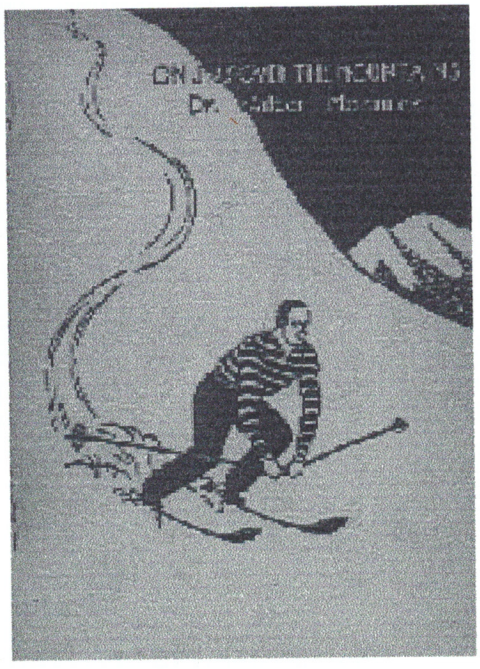


1934

Walter Mosauer

1905-1937

Father of Alpine Skiing in Southern California

Notes compiled for Wolfgang Lert by Glen Dawson

Pasadena, 1997

1937

WALTER MOSAUER

1905-1937

Walter Mosauer has been called the "Father" of Alpine Skiing in Southern California He was born in Vienna, Austria May 29, 1905. He learned to ski in the mountains near Vienna. In 1928 he lead a University of Vienna Expedition to the Sahara Desert. He earned his M. D. at Vienna but never practiced medicine or dentistry but through an association with Franz Werner chose the study of herpetology. He came to the United States and earned his Ph.D. in Zoology , University of Michigan. 1931 . In 1930 he was Instructor of Zoology at the University of California at Los Angeles. Walter was delighted to find mountains to climb, snow on which to ski, and students wanting to learn to ski.

When Walter came to California about the only skiing was ski jumping and competition. Walter Mosauer was interested in ski touring but took on the job of Coach of the Ski Team at UCLA. Only once did he enter a ski race and that was against his own UCLA Ski Team at Fales Hot Springs and Walter Mosauer was an easy winner. Walter Mosauer made a number of ski ascents in Oregon and Washington including the first ski ascent of Mount Adams July 16, 1932.

Walter Mosauer was a good teacher and a flamboyant writer and speaker He wrote a little book of instruction.*On Skis over the Mountains* ,Foreword by Ernest Dawson.1934 and a second edition (with an illustration of Wolfgang Lert), 1937.

Walter Mosauer wrote a number of articles including one for *The Sportsman Magazine,* December 1934; "I'll take Snakes and Skis" in *Los Angeles Times Sunday Magazine,* February 18, 1934. "Ski Touring Around Los Angeles" in *Trails Magazine,* Winter 1935, "White Death in the Mountains" *Trails Magazine,* Winter 1936, " Ski Mountaineering in California" *Trails Magazine,* Autumn 1936. and "Ski Trips in Southern California", *Sierra Club Bulletin,* 1934 and "Skiing on the East Side of the Sierra" *Sierra Club Bulletin,* 1936.

The UCLA Ice Hockey Team and Ski Team participated in Winter Sports Carnivals and Inter-Collegiate Winter Games at Big Pines, Lake Arrowhead and Yosemite National Park.

1934

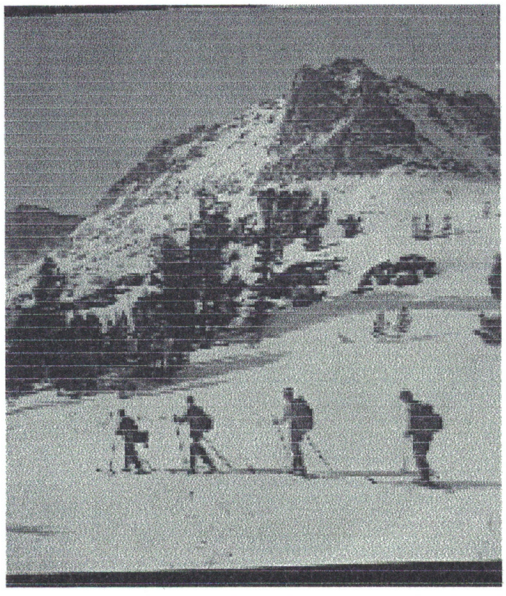
In January 1933 the Winter Sports Teams and the UCLA Band were snowed in at Lake Arrowhead.. Dr. Mosauer needed to get back to teach classes at UCLA and skied down the road until he could hitch hike home. I cut classes for a couple of days staying until snow plows reached my car.

In early April, 1933 Murray Kirkwood, Glen Dawson, Louis Turner and Walter Mosauer spent two days skiing on the north side of Mount San Gorgonio, the highest peak in Southern California. Later the same month Glen Dawson, Louis Turner, Dick Jones and Walter Mosauer skied to Kearsarge Pass in the High Sierra.

Walter accompanied the UCLA Ski Team on other field trips to Mount San Antonio and Mount San Gorgonio and to the the east side of the High Sierra..In February 7-15, 1934 there was a trip with Norman Clyde to Schober's Camp and Parcher's Camp and to Bishop Pass on skis. Those participating were Glen Dawson, Dick Jones, Seth Blakeman, Eric Varney, Howard Boller, Louis Turner, Frank Robinson, Wolfgag Lert and Walter Mosauer. We visited Norman Clyde and William Dulley. The illustration below is the cabin where Clyde was staying.

There are four figures in the picture.The only one I can identify is Louis Turner the tall one on the right. Under the eves to the left is a tin can and Louis remembers that to wake us up for breakfast Norman Clyde would use his pistol to fire at the tin cans hung under the eves.

Walter Mosauer giving UCLA Ski team instruction , near Bishop Pass, Feburary 1934



This photo of Bishop Pass trip of 1934 was reproduced in Trails Magazine. Loaned by Louis Turner.

The trip I remember best was to Fales Hot Springs in 1935 described by Walter Mosauer in "Skiing on the East Side of the Sierra", in the *Sierra Club Bulletin* 1936. Incomplete ascents were made of Mount Emma, Dunderberg Peak and Mammoth Mountain, Finally a successful ascent of Mammoth Mountain when we could ski all day an not meet anyone else on the mountain. We had Fales Hot Springs all to ourselves with a warm swimming pool after ski lessons and races during the day. Early members of the UCLA Ski Team included Louis Turner, Seth Blakeman, Glen Dawson, Howard Boller, Dick Jones, Allan Cameron. Kerns Hampton, Frank Robinson and Wolfgang Lert.

While I was in Europe, Bob Brinton and Walter Mosauer climbed Dunderberg Peak on a perfect day. April 10. 1936. Bob Brinton wrote a short article about it in *Sierra Club Bulletin,* 1937.

The Ski Mountaineers of California was founded November 7, 1932 at the home of Dr. Walter Mosauer.

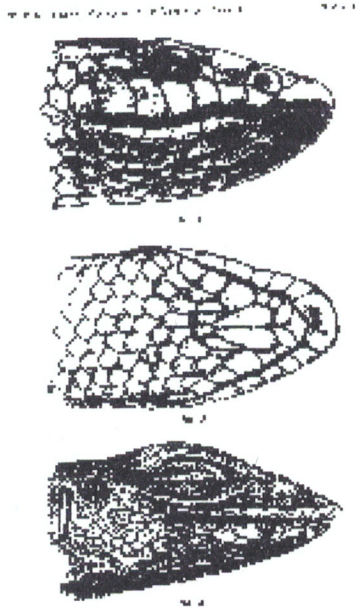
The fourteen charter members were Walter Mosauer, President, Leland Curtis Vice-President (and designer of a beautiful pin)..Frank "Tug" Richardson, Secretary-Treasurer, Stanley Allen, Bob Frampton, Louis Turner, Eric Varney, Seth Blakeman, Wolfgang Lert (name listed but Wolfgang says he must have joined later), Miles Werner, Dick Jones, Mac Salter, Louis Simon and Glen Dawson. Also elected charter member in absentia. Murray Kirkwood.

One of the objects of the Ski Mountaineers was to build a ski hut on Mount San Antonio.. When permission was denied by the Forest Service to build, the Ski Mountaineers became a section of the Southern California Chapter of the Sierra Club. This was made possible by the intervention and persuasion of Ernest Dawson then president of the Sierra Club. The Baldy Hut on Mount San Antonio was built in 1935 and rebuilt in 1936 and 1937.

Walter wrote a light hearted article in German about Palm Springs "Nachtleben in der Kalifornischen Wuste" which was published in Vienna.

Walter Mosauer wrote a number of technical papers some in German and some in English. One which Dr. Mason gave me is *The Myology of the Trunk Region of Snakes and its Significance for Ophidian Taxonomy and Phylogeny.* at separate from Publications of the University of California at Los Angeles in Biological Sciences Volume I, No. pp. 81-120. Berkeley, University of California Press, I935.

University of Michigan Museum of Zoology Occasional Papers 245 is *Amphibians and Reptiles of the Guadalupe Mountains.*



In the early summer of 1934 Walter Mosauer spent four weeks collecting in northern and central Lower California. This resulted in a pamphlet *The Reptilian Fauna of Sand Dune areas of the Vizcaino Desert and of north-western Lower California,* 2I pages and six illustrations. Occasional Papers of the Museum of Zoology, University of

Michigan, Number 329, March 31, l936. It is listed as Number 1810 in Ellen Barrett's Bibliography: *Baja California 1535-1956. W*alter had considerable artistic talent and no doubt made the drawings for his publications.

In 1934 appeared *The reptiles and amphibians of Tunisia* part of the Publications of the University of California at Los Angeles in biological sciences, vol. 1, no. 3.

Walter Mosauer spent time with other herpetologists including R. B. Cowles, Charles Bogert and L. M. Klauber

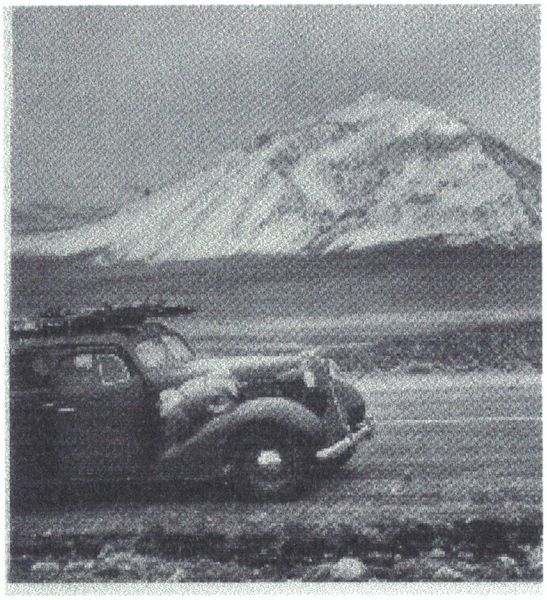
In August of 1937 Walter Mosauer was in Mexico conducting research on snakes. He died from blood poisoning possibly from a plant or snake.

A Walter Mosauer Memorial Fund was established to build a ski hut on Mount San Gorgonio. The Edelweiss Ski Club had an unauthorized ski hut, available through Walter Lier to the Ski Mountaineers, and several other shelters were built. Eventually it was decided to retain the San Gorgonio Wilderness Area and existing huts were removed. The funds in the Mosauer Fund were used to build the Keller Peak Ski Hut.

Walter's father,Dr. Karl Mosauer was a dentist During World War I, he was Captain. Karl Mosauer a medical officer in the army of Emperor Franz Joseph. In 1934 Walter visited his family and shipped an Essex car as a present. All five of the family visited the Gross Glockner. Later, because Karl and Rosa Mosauer were Jews they left Austria and lived in Italy during the war period and Karl Mosauer died there before he could get permission to come to the United States.
The brothers of Walter Mosauer are Kurt Mosauer who has changed his name to Curtis Mason and Henry (Heinz) Mosauer. The Ski Mountaineers were of some help in getting Henry to the United States. Both brothers served in the United States Army. Curtis was a First Lieutenant with the Ninth Armored Division crossing Germany from west to east. Dr. Curtis Mason is a retired optometrist He lives with his wife Doris in Downey. California.They have two daughters and three grandchildren.
Henry was one of the first American soldiers to enter Vienna.his old home city. Henry and Lillian were married in 1941 and have two children, Eleanor and Walter C. Mosauer, named for his uncle.

World War II scattered the Ski Mountaineers, some going into the Tenth Mountain Division Ski lifts and facilities have been built unimagined by those of us who skied in the l930s.Walter Mosauer's vision and enthusiasm was a strong influence in the history of ski mountaineering in California.

As a postscript I am including a mention of a Bavarian ski team that visited America the winter of l938-39 shortly after the death of Walter Mosauer. I had one place in my car and took Xaver Kraisy with me to Owens Valley. The was a ski race using one of Dave McCoys first rope tows and Xaver from Germany was the winner of the races held.

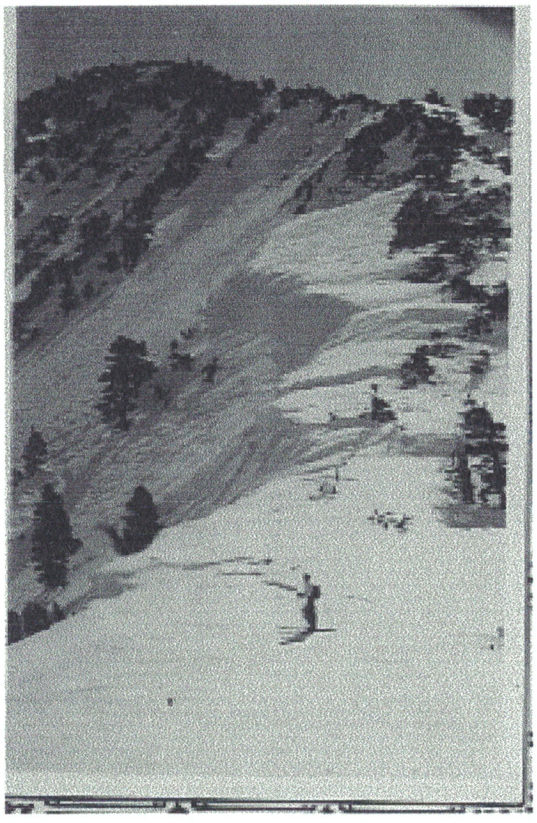


En route to David McCoy's Rope Tow

Above is dust jacket of book published by Wilhelm Limperi-Verlang, Berlin (1939)

Otto Steinhauser leaves the Agaves of Southern California bound for the High Sierra

Dave McCoy's Rope Tow 1938-39 from *Bayrische Bretttl* by Richard May , (1939)



Louis Turner and Telegraph Peak, Feb, 22, 1933.

Photo of Walter Mosauer by Robert K. Brinton. Collection of Muir Dawson

Third Draft. Thanks to Adrienne Jones, Dr. Curtis Mason and Wolfgang Lert for corrections and additions. 12/11/97

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